

M A R I A ;

OR, THE

GENEROUS RUSTIC.

Presented to Miss Burnett
by

—
The Author —

Entered 7th July 1784

M A R I A;
OR THE
GENEROUS RUSTIC.

O may we never love as these have lov'd!

POPE.

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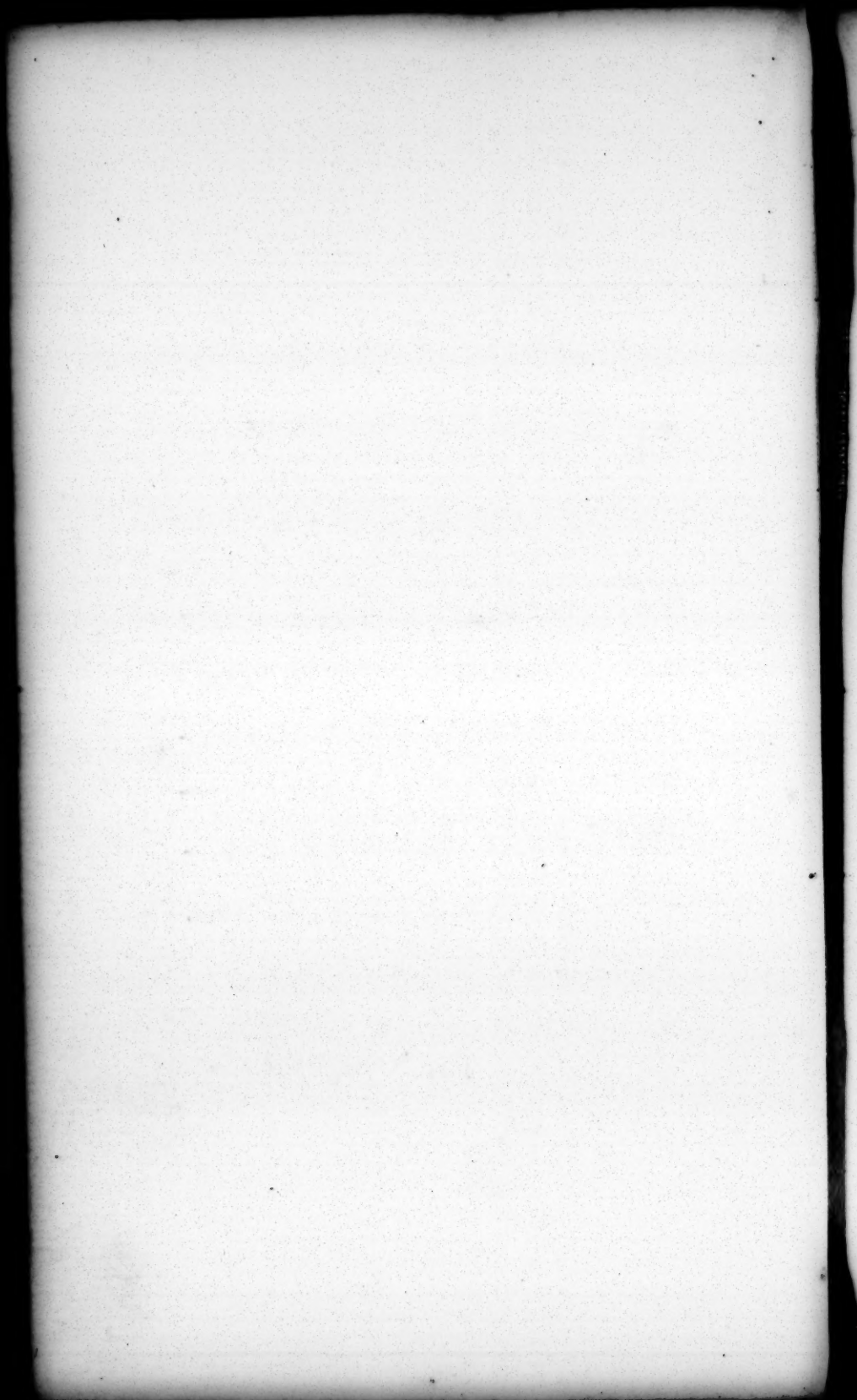


DEDICATION.

TO ALMERIA,

WHO POSSESSES EVERY VIRTUE
THAT ADORNED THE UNFOR-
TUNATE MARIA, ARE THE FOL-
LOWING SHEETS INSCRIBED:—
WHILST THAT SHE MAY EXPE-
RIENCE A Milder FATE, IS THE
SINCEREST WISH OF

THE AUTHOR.



P R E F A C E.

THE unfortunate have a strong claim to every service we can render them; and that man is the happiest who has most opportunities of lightening the load of woe with which the most virtuous, as well as the most profligate, are often oppressed. If we cannot relieve, we should ever sympathise with the sons and daughters of affliction. But if we are ignorant of their sorrows till death has kindly placed them beyond the reach of persecution, the only attention we can then show them, is to transmit their sufferings and their virtues to posterity;—who, though their sorrows

viii P R E F A C E.

may long have ceased, will not refuse to bedew the melancholy page with the tear of sympathy.

Not having had the happiness of knowing the Marquis of Clerville or his Maria, I had it not in my power to attempt an alleviation of their sorrows.—If I had, my attempt might not have been crowned with success. But many are the revolving years that have elapsed since Clerville and Maria ceased to sigh. The only attention I can now pay the illustrious pair, is to perpetuate their unhappy fate.

The Marquis of Clerville fell an early victim at the shrine of hopeless love. He
adored

P R E F A C E. ix

adored a woman who proved herself worthy of him; and who exhibited a fortitude of mind that must excite the admiration, while her misfortunes claim the pity, of succeeding ages. She even preferred misery to peace, when the latter could only be purchased by what she thought the happiness of her Clerville.

The Author is conscious that the following sheets may contain many errors; but trusts they will be pardoned, when it is considered that he wrote, not to immortalize *himself* but MARIA.

M A -

M A R I A;
OR THE
GENEROUS RUSTIC.

C H A P. I.

FIFTEEN years had just elapsed
from the birth of the Marquis
of Clerville, when he was deprived of
his

his father. His mother had no sooner paid the last rites to her lord's memory, than she removed from the family-seat at Clerville to Paris, taking with her the young Marquis; who, more from necessity than choice, plunged at once into all the dissipation of the capital. His mother's first care, on her arrival, was to procure for her son a commission in the guards, that he might have an opportunity of mixing with men of his own rank.— Here commenced his acquaintance with the Baron Fitzou. In him he found a true friend, who was willing to sacrifice even his life in his service; and who endeavoured, but
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in vain, to prevent the misfortunes which afterwards befel him. The Marquis continued in the guards till he was of age; when that good sense of which he was possessed, led him to see the folly of a life spent in a continual round of dissipation and idle visits. He therefore determined to quit the service, and retire to Clerville, where he hoped to spend his time more to his own satisfaction than he had hitherto done. He imparted his design to no one but his friend the Baron; who, however foolish he might think it, seeing his friend determined, gave his approbation. The Marquis, delighted to find his plan approved by
Fitzou,

Fitzou, resigned his commission ; and without staying to hear the censures of his companions, set out for Clerville, having first requested his mother to pass the summer with him : With which request she complied, in hopes to reclaim her son, whom she now considered as mad. On his arrival at Clerville, he found the house much out of order, and the grounds like a desert ; but he was too much determined with respect to his plan, to have his resolution shaken by so slight an obstacle.

C H A P.

C H A P. II.

THE Marquis had scarcely reached Clerville, when he received letters from all his quondam companions, rallying him in the strongest manner, on a resolution which, they affirmed, was condemned by all Paris, and which had exposed him to the ridicule of all his friends and acquaintances. To these letters the Marquis returned no answer, but that he must submit with

with patience to their ridicule, as he was determined to persevere in a plan which to him appeared to be highly rational. In a few days the Marchioness appeared, laden with epistolary admonitions from his uncles; which, bating that they were treated with more apparent respect, met with no better fate than did those of his gay companions.

The Marchioness attempted to rally her son on his romantic plan; but finding he was not to be laughed out of it, she endeavoured to prevail by reasoning with him. Her arguments, however, produced no better effect than

than her railleries ; and the Marquis remained fixed in his intention of settling at Clerville. The summer was spent in fruitless remonstrances on the part of the Marchioness, and unheeded replies on that of the Marquis. When the season drew near when the Marchioness was to return to the circle of her gay friends, she became more urgent than ever that her son should return with her to the honours of Versailles and the amusements of Paris. But having made one great effort, and that proving unsuccessful, she bid him adieu ; hoping nevertheless to reclaim him, after he should have spent a solitary winter in the

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rookery

rookery at Clerville. On her arrival at Paris, all his former companions flocked to her house, not doubting that they should there find the Marquis, cured of all his romantic ideas. But on hearing that he had withstood all his mother's intreaties, and their ridicule, they despaired of seeing him till next winter.

The Marquis, in the mean time, was pursuing his studies and his improvements with vigour. He spent the morning in viewing his estate and improving his pleasure-grounds; while his afternoons were either devoted to study, or to visiting those of his neighbours,

bours, the narrowness of whose fortunes prevented them from shining in the beau monde.

C H A P. III.

IN this manner had the whole winter elapsed, undistinguished by any remarkable event, when the Marquis received a visit from his old friend the Baron Fitzou, with whom he had kept up a constant correspondence; but who, till then, had been prevented from visiting Clerville by his absence from France. The Marquis received

ceived him with all those demonstrations of joy which are natural at the sight of one who is dear to us, and from whom we have been long separated. The Baron expressed the utmost satisfaction at finding his friend pleased with the plan which he had chosen, and which he owned had not at first appeared to him so rational as it now did.

A few days after the Baron's arrival, as they were walking in the park, they observed at some distance a carriage ; which, on a closer inspection, proved to be that of the Marchioness. On the sight of her son, she alighted ;

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was by him received with the utmost respect, and conducted to the castle ; where dinner being served up, prevented those reflections on his mode of life, which he above all things dreaded.

The cloth was, however, no sooner removed, than she inquired, whether he did not now see the folly of his conduct, in retiring from the world at a time when he was most qualified for enjoying it ? To this inquiry the Marquis made answer, That had his manner of life been honoured with her approbation, he should have been completely happy, as nothing but her dislike

dislike of it could render it disagreeable. The Marchioness, by no means edified with an answer so diametrically opposite to what she wished, after having staid a few days at the castle, returned to Versailles, despairing of ever reclaiming her son.

The Baron soon after received a summons to attend the King; and the Marquis was left, by his departure, in his usual solitude. A solitude, however, which was frequently and agreeably interrupted by the visits of Monsieur Fenelon, the curé of the parish: a man of extensive learning, gentle manners, true piety, and

liberal sentiments.—With such a neighbour, it was impossible that the Marquis should ever feel *ennui*. By his assistance he had recovered his knowledge of the classics, and was become an excellent scholar.

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

THE goddess of Content had hitherto resided with her favourite votary at Clerville: but the melancholy hour of her exile was at hand, and a less friendly deity was soon to fix his abode there. The Marquis had not as yet burnt incense at the altar of Cythera; but the little god, jealous of his own and his mother's honour,

honour, aimed a gall-steeped arrow at his heart ; and he who, till then, had never sacrificed, was doomed himself to fall an early victim at the shrine of love.

The Marquis, one day as he was riding, being overtaken by a storm of thunder and lightning, repaired for shelter to a neighbouring farm-house ; the beauty of whose situation, as well as its vicinity, tempted him to visit it. On his entrance, he found the master, his wife, and only daughter, seated at a rustic board. He no sooner appeared, than he was invited to partake of the rural repast ; an invitation.

tation which he accepted without hesitation. But the lustre of Maria's eyes so engaged his attention, that it was with difficulty he could comply with the pressing invitations of the old people to eat. The storm disappearing, he with reluctance quitted the cottage; where, at that instant, he would have been glad to spend his days, provided he might enjoy the company of Maria.

Maria's charms had made too deep an impression on the heart of the Marquis to permit of his not soon repeating his visit. Accordingly, in a few days, on pretence of thanking them
for

for their hospitality, he returned to the cottage (the inhabitants of which had now learnt the rank of their guest), that he might contemplate the charms of the fair rustic. As he approached the house, he perceived Maria sitting under the shade of a large elm, with a book in her hand. He instantly alighted; and, advancing, addressed himself to her. But Maria, disconcerted at his appearance, and reflecting on the easy manner in which they had formerly treated him, fled to the house with the utmost precipitation, dropping her book; which was eagerly seized by the Marquis. He then proceeded to the cottage.

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The old people, distressed to the last degree at the sight of the Marquis, apologised, in an awkward manner, for the treatment he had experienced at his former visit; declaring, that nothing but their ignorance of his rank could excuse their conduct. The Marquis, who was ever amiable, was by no means inclined to be harsh to any thing connected with Maria. He received their excuses with politeness; begged them to be composed; thanked them for their hospitality; and, notifying to them his intention of dining with them, restored to the cottage its usual tranquillity.—The old people, delighted

ighted with the Marquis, prepared for dinner, whilst the amusement of their noble guest was entrusted to Maria.—A task pleasing in itself; but for which she was then but ill qualified, on account of her embarrassment and nescience of the world.

Dinner, however, soon released Maria from her tete-a-tete with the Marquis; and the whole family sat down to a neat but frugal board. Dinner being ended, the Marquis requested Maria's leave to visit the dairy. With this request she could not refuse to comply; and accordingly attended him to the scene of his happiest

piest hours. During their conversation, he was so struck with her modesty and good sense, that he asked permission to repeat his visit. Maria blushed consent; and the Marquis having taken leave of the old people, returned to Clerville, leaving Maria in a state of mind to which she had been a stranger previous to her acquaintance with him.

C H A P. V.

BUT before I proceed farther in my narrative, it will be necessary to give some description of Maria's mental accomplishments; for as her personal charms beggared all description, I shall pass them over in silence. Her father, though not a man of much learning himself, had (by advice of the Curé) spared no pains

on her education. Music, painting, &c. were accomplishments for which she was indebted to the vicinage of a convent, where she was placed from twelve to fifteen. The Curé had early implanted in her breast those sentiments of piety and virtue which, aided by an uncommon fortitude, supported her in those trying situations in which she was afterwards placed.

It is not to be wondered, that by a woman so accomplished, and so handsome, a deep impression should be made on a sensible heart. The Marquis frequently repeated his visits; which at last alarming the old people,

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they now cautioned their daughter against him, as a man who, however amiable he might appear, would not, should opportunity offer, hesitate to ruin her. Maria, terrified by this admonition, received the Marquis at his next visit with a coldness that astonished him. He was not long at a loss to guess the cause of this alteration in her conduct, from whom he now dreaded an eternal separation. The mention of marriage was not to be thought of; and, from the check she had just received, he had no great hopes of success on any other ground.

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In this dilemma, he applied for assistance to an aunt of Maria's; who rendered herself unworthy of such a niece, by concurring with the Marquis in his design upon her virtue. She undertook to deliver to Maria the Marquis's proposals; which were such as might be expected from a young man deeply enamoured, whom respect for the absurd maxims of the world prevented from matching himself with one of inferior rank. They were received by Maria with deserved contempt; and she gave the Marquis to understand, that she never more would see a man who had been ca-

pable of offering her such an insult.

C H A P.

C H A P. VI.

THE Marquis seeing all hopes of possessing Maria at an end, gave himself up to despair. The solitary life which he led, served only to increase his passion. Maria's image was ever present to his mind; and the day was spent cursing his unhappy fate, born to honours which were the only source of his misfortunes,

and of which he wished it possible to divest himself; whilst the night was passed in dreaming of his happier hours, which were now past recovery fled.

Maria in the mean time had attempted, but in vain, to efface from her mind the impression which the Marquis had made on it: for notwithstanding his ungenerous offer, she loved him still. Her friends remarked with grief, that her former serenity and cheerfulness were gone. She who was once the gayest on the green, now sat drooping at the side of a brook, that seemed to sympathise with her wo; whilst the hills,
which

which once re-echoed her happy strains, heard nothing but sighs.— Thus did Maria spend each sad revolving day ; doomed to love, yet forbid to hope, and conscious that her birth was the only obstacle to her happiness.

Affairs were in this situation when the Marchioness made her appearance at the castle ; for the news of the Marquis's amour had reached Paris, with this embellishment, that he was soon to be united to Maria. On her arrival, she found the Marquis plunged in the deepest melancholy. She urged him with the ut-

most vehemence to return to Paris. To this, however, he would by no means consent, but promised to visit England: a country for which he entertained a high respect; esteeming the English a free, a noble, and a generous people.—The Marchioness, on receiving her son's promise to leave Clerville in a few days, left the castle without mentioning Maria, having learnt that there was no probability of his marrying her.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

NO sooner was the Marchioness gone, than the Marquis set out for Dunkirk, without venturing to bid adieu to Maria. A few days landed him at Dover; whence he proceeded to Canterbury; where, tho' no bigot, he visited the shrine of the mitred martyr. This ceremony performed, he set out for the capital, where

where his rank introduced him to the best company ; and in which, had he not been sunk in the deepest melancholy, he would have shone with lustre : But he was so much altered by his misfortunes, that that wit which had rendered him the idol of Paris [was banished, and he always appeared as if he was any where but where he was.

In compliance, however, with his mother's commands, the Marquis spent two years in England ; during which time he visited Bath, Windsor, the environs of London, and South Wales ; where he was much
struck

struck with the beautiful scenery which every where presented itself to his view. Scenes so romantic did not fail to inspire the Marquis with those ideas which he endeavoured to banish from his mind. During his residence in England, he constantly corresponded with the Baron; who had his positive orders to send an account of Maria in every letter.

The time of his banishment being now expired, the Marquis set out on his return to France; and a few days landed him at Clerville.

C H A P. VIII.

AS he was riding one evening soon after his arrival, he observed a female figure reclined by the side of a brook. He immediately jumped off his horse ; and having fastened him to a tree, advanced gently to contemplate the fair unknown. —The trees that overshadowed the brook prevented her from seeing the Marquis ;

Marquis ; who, on a nearer approach, discovered it to be his loved Maria.

At the sight of Maria, the Marquis thought himself completely happy ; for as she had declared she would never receive another visit from him, he had lost all hopes of seeing her again. He threw himself at her feet ; and eagerly seizing her hand, kissed it before she was sufficiently recovered from her surprise to discover who he was. No sooner, however, was this discovery made, than Maria swooned. The Marquis flew in an agony to get some water from the brook. He
tried

all means to restore her ; but in vain for some time. At last, however, she opened her eyes ; and casting them on the Marquis, fainted once more. Shocked at her relapse, he stood motionless with grief and despair, till he was roused by the arrival of one of his servants ; who, happening to pass that way, and observing his master's horse, had entered the grove in search of him, dreading lest he had met with some accident. The servant was no sooner perceived by the Marquis, than he was dispatched to the castle for salts, &c. but with orders to mention to no one the situation in which he had found his master.

fter. The Marquis in the mean time endeavoured, by throwing cold water on her face, to recover Maria; and he was fortunate enough to succeed: for when the servant returned, he found her seated on a bank, reclining on his master's arm, but very weak.

Maria had no sooner recovered from her second fainting-fit, than the Marquis intreated her to be composed; assuring her that no violence should ever be offered her by him. A little comforted by these assurances, she entered into conversation with him, desiring him to permit her
to

to return home, and to promise never to disturb her retreat. For tho' she was not happy there, nor ever could be any where, yet she there enjoyed a sort of repose, which his presence would infallibly destroy. She owned that she had a great regard for him ; a regard which would prevent her from ever being any one's but his. But as she never could be his consistently with her honour, she was determined never to be his at all. Her happiness was a sacrifice she had not with-held ; but her honour should ever remain sacred and inviolate.

The Marquis begged pardon for the

offers he had made her through her aunt, and pleaded in excuse the excess of his passion; observing, that the foolish maxims of the age in which they lived, had placed insuperable obstacles between them and happiness. He assured her, that it now gave him the highest pleasure, to think that she had treated his offers as they deserved; and concluded with promising never more to make attempts of a similar nature.

Maria was by this time sufficiently recovered to think of returning home: and accordingly, with the assistance of the Marquis, she reached the dairy;

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the scene of happy hours that were no more to return, and on which they reflected with pleasure mixed with regret. Here Maria bid adieu to the Marquis, strictly forbidding him to visit her on any pretence whatever, and returned to the cottage; where her presence occasioned as much joy as had her absence uneasiness.

C H A P.

C H A P. IX.

THE Marquis, in the mean time, returned to Clerville more enamoured than ever ; and determined, that, as he could not confer the title of Marchioness of Clerville on Maria, no other woman ever should enjoy it. As soon as he found himself at the castle, he retired to his dressing-room, that he might be at leisure to

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indulge

indulge those melancholy reflections that engrossed his mind. Here he sat meditating on his unhappy fate till midnight, when he was alarmed by the horn of an express who rode into the court-yard. He immediately flew down ; and snatching the letter from the bearer, opened it with the utmost anxiety. He no sooner cast his eyes on the writing, than he knew it to be the Baron's, who requested his immediate presence at Paris on business of the utmost importance. With this request the Marquis hesitated not to comply ; and three days after, he reached the capital.

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On his arrival, the Baron informed him, that an uncle of his had died at Lisbon, and had left him a considerable property ; of which, however, he could not take possession but in person ; and he requested the Marquis to accompany him thither. The Marquis wished not to comply : at the same time, he could not refuse any thing to the Baron ; and so he at length determined to bid adieu to Clerville castle and to Maria for a few months.

Before he embarked, however, he wrote to Maria, regretting his being obliged to leave Clerville : For tho'

he could not see her, as she had not yet consented to receive his visits, he had the pleasure of hearing of her every day. Of this pleasure, however, he was now to be deprived; and in a few days the two friends embarked for Portugal.

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

THEIR voyage was prosperous till they were within a few days sail of their destined port, when one morning an Algerine corsair was discovered bearing down upon them. The appearance of this worthy follower of Mahomet excited very disagreeable sensations in the breasts of the crew, as their vessel was of force consider-

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ably

ably inferior to that of the Corfair. He was now, however, too near to admit of their escaping ; they therefore determined to sell their lives or their liberties dearly. The Marquis, though a soldier, had never seen service. He embraced with ardour this opportunity of showing that he had not resigned his sword because he knew not how to use it. A few minutes brought them close to each other, and a mutual discharge of broadsides took place. The action continued for twenty minutes, when the Marquis ordered out the grappling irons, and united the Corfair
to

to them by ties of not a very ductile nature. His ardour increasing every minute, he at last determined to board them. In this bold attempt he succeeded, and found himself in an instant on the deck of the Corsair. Several of the crew attempted to follow the example of the Marquis, but perished in the attempt. Some few succeeded, but were soon sacrificed to the rage of the enemy; who finding themselves boarded, fought with the utmost fury. The Marquis, however, had penetrated unhurt into the middle of the deck, where he was made prisoner; as the aim of the
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Algerine cruifers is always to take as many prifoners as poffible.

At that instant the Corfair loft her main-maft and confiderable part of her rigging. This being obferved by the French, they quickly made off, notwithstanding the threats and intreaties of the Baron, who was wounded in attempting to follow his friend, and now fat upon the deck in a chair, to fee if any thing could be done to refcue him. But the French being fatisfied with the reception they had already met with, did not choofe to hazard the event of a fecond engagement; and a frefh gale spring-

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ing up, soon wafted them beyond
the reach of their disabled ene-
my.

CHAP.

C H A P. XI.

THE Baron still sat on the deck, beholding, with inexpressible anguish, the prison of his friend ; a prison into which he had been led by his friendship for him. While he was indulging those melancholy reflections, his wound had bled so much that he was quite faint : but, faint as he was, he ordered out the pinnace, and

and determined to go and share the fortune of his friend. But not one of the crew would undertake to man it, expecting that as soon as they should come within reach of the Corsair's guns they should all perish.—

The Baron finding that neither threats nor intreaties would prevail on the crew to row him to the Corsair, gave himself up to despair. He was now so weakened by his wound, that this new agitation threw him into a fainting fit; during which his servant, assisted by some of the crew, carried him to the cabin; where the surgeon dressed his wound, and put him to bed. He slept for some hours; but

no sooner awoke than it was evident he was delirious. He called on the Marquis ; he offered to beggar himself to procure his ransom ; and asked pardon of Maria for having deprived her of her Clerville.

In this manner he continued raving for some hours. At length he fell asleep ; and having taken a composing draught, slept sound for some time. When he awoke he seemed much better, and was soon able to sit on the deck for the benefit of air. The winds had proved contrary ever since they had parted with the Corsair ; but they were now favourable,
and

and a few days landed the Baron in Lisbon; where his first employment was to prepare for a voyage to Algiers, which he determined to undertake as soon as the state of his wound would permit him.

C H A P.

C H A P. XII.

THE wished-for hour at length came, and the Baron embarked for Algiers; where he arrived safe after a short passage. He thought, that if he was once landed he should have very little difficulty to procure the freedom of his friend, having brought an immense sum with him for that purpose. In this, however, he

he was disappointed: for on his arrival at Algiers, he found that the captain of the Corfair had sold his friend to he did not know whom. Distressed to the last degree at this melancholy piece of intelligence, he inquired how long he had been sold. They informed him, some weeks; and that he was gone far up into the country, but to what place they did not know. In this dilemma he determined to set out in search of his friend; having procured an order from the Dey that he should be delivered up to him, on paying the price which had been paid to the captain.

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For a long while his searches were unsuccessful: but after having experienced nothing but disappointment for seven months, he at last found the Marquis employed as a gardener in a retired part of the country. To attempt a description of the feelings of these two friends on this joyful meeting, would be superfluous; and to execute such a description, would be impracticable. I shall therefore hasten to inform the reader of what happened to the Marquis after he was taken prisoner.

His treatment on board was not so harsh as might have been expected;
and

and the Corfair's being much damaged put an early period to his confinement, as the captain made for Algiers with all possible speed. His first care, on his arrival, was to dispose of the Marquis, lest the Dey should put in his claim. The person who bought him resided in the most remote part of the country; and finding him a good gardener (that having been one of the Marquis's amusements at Clerville), he committed to him the care of his garden. This trust the Marquis executed with so much fidelity and ability, that he soon became a great favourite with his new master.

The old Mahometan was walking in his garden when the Baron entered. The Marquis and he flew into one another's arms; in which situation they remained for some moments, to the astonishment of the mussulman. At last, however, advancing towards them, he received from the Baron the Dey's order for the liberty of the Marquis. He read it over two or three times with attention, as it contained a short account of the Marquis's misfortunes. He then returned it, assuring them by their interpreter that it was totally useless; for that from that time the Marquis was his own master; but on
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one condition only, that he did not offer to pay for his liberty.

The two friends looked at each other with astonishment. At length the Marquis broke silence ; declaring, that if these were the only terms on which he could procure his freedom, he would end his days in slavery. An interesting contest ensued between the Marquis and his master ; in which the former at last proved victorious, and the generous Mahometan was constrained to accept of a thousand pounds as an equivalent for the Marquis's freedom,

dom,——a sum much greater than what he had given for him.

At the request of the Turk, they deferred their departure for some days ; during which time they wrote to France, informing their friends of the joyful event that had taken place. The hour at length arrived when they were to bid adieu to the generous Mahometan ; who, whatever his religious principles were, would have done honour to any religion. He embraced them at parting ; and earnestly recommending them to the protection of the prophet, bade them farewell. The Marquis could not
restrain

refrain from tears, at leaving a man whose conduct towards him had been so noble and disinterested. He bid adieu to a state of servitude, with feelings not common on such an occasion; and could he have forgotten his loved Maria, he would have felt still more than he did at quitting the generous Mahometan.

C H A P. XIII.

THE two friends in a few days arrived at Algiers, whence the Marquis insisted on sailing to Lisbon before they returned to France; declaring, that as the Baron had sacrificed his own interests to his happiness, he must now accompany him to settle them. To this the Baron with reluctance consented; and the day

day for sailing was fixed, when one evening as the Marquis and he were at supper, a number of armed men suddenly entered, and seizing the Marquis, carried him off, notwithstanding all the resistance the Baron could make.

Both the one and the other knowing the violences that are daily committed under that government, despaired of ever meeting more. But Clerville was doomed to suffer unnumbered woes ere death should sign his release. He found himself conveyed to a large house about three miles from the town, which had all
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the appearance of a palace. Here he passed the night; and it would be superfluous to add, a sleepless one. The morning having made its appearance, he looked out of his windows, and beheld himself situated in a delightful garden, which Nature seemed to have formed in some lavish hour. Nor had art been less liberal. It was all perfection; and appeared calculated for the abode of love and peace, if ever they had chosen to reside together.

Whilst the Marquis was reflecting on his own situation, he was interrupted by the appearance of a female

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slave,

slave, who accosting him in the language of the country, desired him to banish fear; for that he had been seized only to be conducted to bliss: That a beautiful young widow had seen him as he passed the window the other day; and was so much struck with him, that she determined to confer on him, herself and all her immense riches: that as soon as he had dressed himself in the Turkish habit he was to repair to her, and that she would be his conductress.

The Marquis determined to obey immediately; and having dressed himself in a dress which was brought him
by

by the slave, he followed her into a large room, at the upper end of which he beheld, seated on a sofa, a fine female figure, most richly adorned. She advanced a few steps to meet him; and having saluted him in the manner of the country, she seated him by herself on the sofa, and thus addressed him.

“ Christian, my slave has already informed you where I first saw you, and how much I was struck with your appearance. If your mind be as beautiful as your person, I shall have no reason to repent the step I have taken. Should that prove the
2 case,

case, I will render your life completely happy. If, on the other hand, I shall have reason to regret my conduct towards you, expect to feel the effects of my vengeance. On the death of my husband, I determined to become a Christian, and to marry one of your faith; as with you the women are treated like women, and not like slaves; and one man is not, as I am told, allowed to have more than one wife. These reasons determined me to marry a Christian; and as I am much pleased with your appearance, I will confer upon you my riches and my person. I have learned from your attendants that you are
not

not married ; I therefore doubt not of your accepting my offer. There remains then nothing for us to do, but to celebrate the marriage according to your rites ; and then we will embark for your country with my treasure, which will enable you to live in splendor and magnificence.

To this address the Marquis listened with the utmost attention, but was perfectly at a loss how to reply. At last, however, after having paused for a considerable time, he answered in the following terms :

“ I

“ I am sensible of the distinguished honour you intend me, when you select me to be the partner of your riches and your bed. It is with reluctance I decline an honour so flattering and so enviable: but vows which I have made,—vows of a most solemn nature,—vows that must for ever remain sacred and inviolate—render it impossible for me to accept that happiness which you so generously offer. I shall, however, remember with gratitude, and reflect with regret, on this day’s adventure. I am sorry that my attachment to one who is now far distant, and who counts with anxiety the hours that intervene

venue between this time and that of my expected return, precludes me from returning that affection you profess for me. It is true we are not united by the rites of our faith; nay, we never may be so: but we have exchanged the most solemn vows, if we do not marry each other, never to marry at all. From these most sacred obligations, no power whatever can release me. You must not therefore do me the injustice to attribute my refusal of your offer to insensibility of your uncommon charms, but to the violence of an unhappy passion, which will, I fear, one day prove my ruin."

During

During the Marquis's discourse, Zara's eyes flashed fire; but when he had concluded it, she gave no bounds to her resentment. She felt herself injured, if not insulted, by this preference given to another; and determined from that instant to effect the ruin of the Marquis. He was by her slaves reconducted to his prison, where he waited with fortitude the event of a transaction from which he had every thing to dread: for the Marquis well knew, that nothing is so dangerous as a slighted female.

He had not, however, been long in his confinement, before the Baron en-

F tered

tered his apartment, and once more restored him to freedom. For, having obtained an order from the Dey for that purpose, he easily discovered the prison of his friend; and in a few minutes conducted him to the harbour, where they embarked for Lisbon; well knowing they had every thing to fear from the resentment of Zara. After a good passage, they landed in Portugal; where the Marquis found letters from all his friends, congratulating him on the recovery of his liberty. But these letters proved unsatisfactory. They contained not the name of Maria; for whom his attachment was as great as ever,
and

M A R I A. 83

and of whom it will now be proper
to say something.

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CHAP.

C H A P. XIV.

AFTER the Marquis's departure, Maria relapsed into her former melancholy. She generally spent the whole day on that spot which had witnessed the affecting interview between her and her lover, and which has been already described. Heaven, however, commiserating her sorrows, sent to her relief one of the most amiable

amiable women that ever lived. Adelaide now made her appearance at the cottage. As her history is something singular, and as she was the friend of Maria, the reader will, I hope, pardon my inserting a short account of it.

Adelaide was the only daughter of the Baron and Baroness D'Aranda. Her father and mother lived in the greatest splendor and magnificence; and by the time Adelaide had reached the age of sixteen, found themselves necessitated to quit Paris, and retire to the family-seat at Clermont.

The Baron, to add to the many other bad qualities he possessed, was a gamester; and some unlucky hit had almost ruined his affairs. The man who retires from the world only because he can no longer afford to live in it, after he has ruined himself by vice, does not generally make the most agreeable companion, because he is never happy in himself—It is to the good man only that retirement is pleasant. With such a companion as the Baron, however, was Adelaide doomed to spend her days when in the bloom of life; she was suddenly torn from the admiration of Paris, and the friends of her youth, to linger

ger in a gloomy solitude. But this she could have borne, had it been the only source of her unhappiness. But her father's temper, ever bad, was now so soured by his recent losses, that he vented his spleen on every one who came in his way.

The Baroness, his wife, was a mild amiable woman, who endeavoured to soften her own lot and that of her daughter, but to no purpose. The Baron was continually cursing that bad luck which had reduced him to his present unhappy state; and, instead of being cured of his passion for gaming, he was constantly expressing

his ardent wishes that he might soon be in a condition to take the field once more.

As soon as they had arrived at Clermont, the Baroness and her daughter used every means to render the Baron's life as pleasant as possible. They invented little amusements for him ; and tried, but in vain, to make him relish his new situation. He grew more morose than ever ; and they remained still unhappy.

Matters had continued in this state
for

for near a year, when the Baronefs was taken ill. She found that ſhe was dying; and having ſent for Adelaide, ſhe gave her her will, in which ſhe had left her all ſhe had to diſpoſe of, *viz.* three thouſand livres a-year; appointing her couſin Monſieur de Vâtres her guardian. With tears in her eyes, ſhe recommended it to her to live with her father as long as ſhe could, and to do every thing in order to pleaſe him. At the ſame time ſhe added, “If you find yourſelf obliged to leave him, which I fear will ſoon be the caſe, retire to Mr de Vâtres, who will protect you; and

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and your own income will support you."

She had scarce finished this discourse, when the Baron entered the room. He was just returned from a card-table at the next town, to which he went as often as he had money, in hopes of repairing his fortunes by some lucky stroke. The servants had informed him of his wife's illness; and he appeared, when he entered, in great agitation. The Baroness no sooner saw him, than she put forth her hand to take hold of his; and having had just strength
enough

enough to recommend her daughter
to his protection, expired.

CHAP.

C H A P. XV.

ADELAIDE, upon the death of her mother, was so much afflicted, that she was thrown into a violent fever, and confined to her chamber for seven weeks. On her recovery, she found her situation worse than ever. The Baron had been but little hurt by the death of his wife ; and the impression which that event had

had made was now totally effaced from his mind. He informed his daughter of his intention to marry her to the Duc d'Albeville, an old worn-out rake; and required her consent. By this match he was determined to repair his ruined fortune; for as the Duc was immensely rich, and Adelaide was extremely handsome, the Baron expected that the greatest advantages would accrue to him from the connection.

Adelaide, shocked at the brutality of her father, and the disgusting manners of her lover, determined to free herself from both. As her father

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ther had declared his resolution, she knew she could only escape by putting herself under the protection of her friend and guardian Mr de Vâtres ; which she took the first opportunity of doing. He received her with the greatest kindness ; assured her of his friendship and support ; and desired she would consider his house as her own. Adelaide thanked him for his goodness ; but requested his leave to reside in the country rather than at Paris. She therefore desired him to choose some place of retirement, where she might pass her days in regretting the loss of an amiable mother.

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With this request Mr de Vâtres complied, and placed her with Maria's father, who was a tenant of his. The old man gladly embraced the proposal, hoping that so agreeable a companion would be a great acquisition to Maria, who was now in a declining state. The two ladies soon became attached to each other. Adelaide had suffered; she therefore knew how to pity. She requested Maria to give her an account of her life and misfortunes: On hearing of which, she could not refrain from tears; and endeavoured, by every means, to comfort the fair mourner: but in vain; Maria gave herself
up

up to despair, when she considered that her future prospects in life were clouded over, and not one friendly ray of hope appeared to dispel the surrounding gloom.

C H A P.

C H A P. XVI.

AFFAIRS were in this situation when the Marquis and his friend returned from Lisbon. Immediately on his landing, he flew to Clerville. He was no sooner there, than he repaired to the conscious grove. But—ah—there was no Maria there! To the cottage he durst not go till he had obtained her leave :

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For that leave he applied ; but it was obstinately refused. He petitioned for an interview ; but to no purpose. Despairing of ever seeing her more, he returned to Clerville, where he was seized with a fever, which lasted thirty days ; during which time the Baron never left his bed-side. When delirious, he called his Maria cruel ; and begged her to visit him. Sometimes he lamented her death, and sometimes prayed heaven to accelerate his own. The physicians, however, at last gave the Baron hopes of his friend's recovery ; and a few days verified their prediction. The Marquis's fever gradually abating, he
soon

soon found himself able to walk in the park ; but he was still so dejected, that the Baron feared, unless some step was taken for banishing his melancholy, he would soon fall a victim to it.

C H A P. XVII.

THE Baron had entertained prejudices against the Marquis's marrying Maria: but he was ashamed to think of sacrificing his friend to his prejudices; and well knowing that desperate diseases require desperate remedies, he proposed himself, that the Marquis should apply for his mother's consent to the marriage.
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He undertook to convey the Marquis's request to the Marchioness; and to assure her, that nothing short of her consent could preserve the life of her son.

To this proposal the Marquis listened with ecstasy. He had often determined within himself to marry Maria; but he feared that even the Baron would not support him in so imprudent a choice. No time, however, was now to be lost; and the Baron set out for Paris, leaving to his friend the delightful office of informing Maria of the step taken in her favour.

This office the Marquis soon discharged. He flew to the cottage, rushed into her chamber, threw himself at her feet, and vowed never to rise till she promised to bless him with her hand, provided he should obtain his mother's consent. The old people, who had followed him to the room, did not leave their daughter time to reply. They declared, that if the Marquis was in earnest, he was the best, the most generous of men. Maria stood speechless. Adelaide, who had never before seen the Marquis, was not at a loss to guess who he was, and expected with impatience the reply of her friend. Maria,

ria, after recovering a little, assured the Marquis that he was going to take a step of which he would repent when it was too late ; but that since he declared his happiness depended on her becoming his, she should defer accepting the honour he now offered her, only till he should receive the Marchioness's approbation.

Maria had no sooner given her consent than the Marquis arose ; and, seating himself by her, reproached her for her cruelty in refusing to see him : but before she could justify herself, she fainted, quite overcome

with the scene which had happened. Adelaide flew to the assistance of her friend ; and in a short time Maria recovered.

The Marquis, who till then had not observed Adelaide, his attention having been wholly engrossed by Maria, now turning to the former, addressed her in the following manner:

“ Madam, as you are the intimate friend of Maria, and are well acquainted with her misfortunes as well as with mine ; my conduct will leave you no room to doubt that I am the
unfor-

unfortunate Marquis of Clerville. Permit me to embrace this opportunity of thanking you for your goodness to Maria; for which I shall be ever grateful. I have long wished to commence an acquaintance with you; but Maria's injunctions forbidding me to visit her, has prevented it till now. I trust you will not refuse me either your friendship or your pity." To this speech Adelaide could make no reply, she was so much confused; but after a little while she retired and left the two lovers alone. The Marquis intreated Maria to delay her happiness no longer than the return of the Baron, whom he expected in a few

few days. With this request she promised to comply ; and it being late, the Marquis, having bid adieu to Maria, returned home to prepare the castle for her reception.

CHAP.

C H A P. XVIII.

AT length the wished-for hour arrived, when the Baron made his appearance at the castle. The Marquis flew to meet him, and read his fate in the Baron's countenance; who delivered to him a letter from the Marchioness, containing a positive refusal of her consent, and a declaration that she would sooner follow

low him to the grave than see him disgrace himself by so degrading a connection as that he now wished to make.

This news had near proved fatal to the Marquis. After, however, having meditated for some time, he went to Maria; informed her of his mother's determination; but declared, that as soon as ever the marriage settlements could be drawn up, he would marry her, be the consequences what they would: That, as to the loss of his mother's estate, he should never feel it; for however small his own fortune might be, it was sufficient

cient for them. He had too good an opinion of her understanding, to suppose that she was ambitious of moving in a higher sphere; that for his own part, he should not hesitate a moment to sink into a lower one, provided he could but call her his.

Maria affected to be delighted with the thoughts of her approaching nuptials. But no sooner was the Marquis gone, than she applied to her father for leave to go for two days to her uncle's, who lived at a few miles distance. This leave being obtained, she set out; but, instead of going to her
her

her uncle's, directed her steps to a convent; the safest retreat of the unfortunate. It was seventy miles from Clerville. There she had a friend, through whose interest she was received by the Abbess, who approved of her intention of taking the veil, and promised she should be concealed there till it should be out of the power of man to take her thence. Being now safe from all pursuit, she wrote the following letter to the Marquis:

“ My dear Lord,

“ It is now time that I should account for my precipitate retreat from

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my father's house and from your arms. Blinded by your passion, you offered to sacrifice your friends, connections, and a large estate, that you might marry a poor insignificant peasant—one who never had many charms, and who sacrificed the few she had at the shrine of melancholy. I should ill deserve the affection of the Marquis of Clerville, if I could accept the generous offer you made me in the heat of passion. No—I never will be yours; but I will deserve to have been yours. Reflect, my Lord, with pleasure, on the escape you have had from being united to a girl, whose birth would have
tar-

tarnished the lustre of your ancient house. In your cooler moments, the truth of what I now say will strike you forcibly. But lest it should be long ere these moments arrive, I shall not discover the place of my residence, till it shall be impossible for you to disgrace yourself by a connection with one, who, though unworthy the honour you intended her, is, and ever will remain,

Yours, and yours alone,

MARIA."

The same post brought a letter to her father, apologizing for her conduct ; and informing him of her intention of remaining in the convent till she should take the veil.

C H A P. XIX.

THE Marquis no sooner received her letter than he flew to the cottage. The first person he met was Adelaide, who was in tears for the loss of her friend. She endeavoured to comfort the Marquis, but to no purpose. He inquired for Maria's father; who no sooner appeared, than he taxed him with being privy to his
daugh-

daughter's elopement. The old man replied only by crying, and tearing his hair, and cursing his fate in having a daughter who rejected honour, and wealth, and happiness, for the sake of burying herself in a convent.

The Marquis finding that none of her letters were dated, vowed to set out the next day in search of her. From this the Baron attempted to dissuade him: but finding him determined to go, he resolved at last to accompany him on his journey; and the next day they set out. Almost every convent in France was search-

ed, but to no purpose. The Marquis's health was declining very fast, owing to the constant fatigues he underwent, and to the agitation of his spirits. He continued his pursuit, however, for near a year; during which time he had not been able to procure any intelligence of Maria. She constantly corresponded with Adelaide, who alone knew where she was hid. This correspondence, in the end, proved the means of her residence being discovered by the Marquis.

Maria, hearing from Adelaide that the Marquis still continued his pursuit,

suit, wrote him the following letter.

My Lord,

Do you still persist in pursuing an object unworthy of your attention? Desist from the inglorious pursuit; which, if crowned with success, will reflect nothing on you but disgrace. I will use my greatest efforts to prevent your ruin. Never more shall you contemplate the source of all your sorrows. You will accuse me of cruelty for forming this resolution: But however cruel you may now think me, you will one day own that she was your best friend, who,

at the expence of her own peace, endeavoured to make you happy, though against your will. Adieu, my Lord. I am in a few days to assume the veil. It will then be out of your power to ruin yourself, should you discover the abode of her who will weary heaven with prayers for your happiness,—for the happiness of one for whom she entertains an affection that will last beyond that grave to which she is now hastening.

C H A P.

C H A P. XX.

THE Marquis received this letter late at night. He perused it several times; and then retired to his room, where he continued walking up and down till morning in great agitation. As soon as the Baron was up, he desired him to set out and follow him, without informing him where they were going. After tra-

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velling a few miles, he stopped at a small inn, finding himself so weak that he could proceed no farther. Here they breakfasted; and just after breakfast stepped into the kitchen, where the post was delivering out the letters for that district. As he was thus employed, the Marquis observed one directed by a well-known hand. He instantly seized it; and before the post could prevent him, he broke it open. It proved to be from Maria to Adelaide; informing her, that on that very day she was to take the veil, in a convent only six miles distant from where the Marquis then was. The Marquis threw down
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the letter ; and running into the stable, seized his horse, and set out full speed for the convent. The Baron, who had caught up the letter, and perceived the contents, immediately followed him ; and they proceeded together to the convent.

When they entered the chapel, the ceremony was begun. The Baron trembled at the sight ; but the Marquis seemed to acquire new fortitude, and waited with heroic firmness the conclusion of the fatal rite. But no sooner was it over, and Maria preparing to withdraw, than, exclaiming with agony, " Cruel Maria !" he
funk

sunk motionless into the arms of the Baron, and expired.

The confusion that so melancholy an event occasioned in the chapel, attracted the eyes of every one. Maria no sooner cast her eyes on the fatal spot where the Marquis lay, than she sunk speechless into the arms of those who stood next her. She was immediately conveyed into the convent ; where she remained insensible for some time : But when she was recovered, they found that she had lost her senses. She raved ; and, addressing herself to the Marquis, promised to marry him immediately ; then asked

ed his pardon for occasioning his death. In this state she remained till evening, when she was conveyed to bed, where she got little sleep, and that very disturbed.

The Baron, in the mean time, had conveyed the Marquis's body to a neighbouring house; where all attempts to restore him to life proved ineffectual. The Baron was almost distracted, and knew not what to do. Next day, however, he repaired to the convent (having, in the mean time, dispatched an express to Adelaide, desiring her immediate presence), and endeavoured to see Maria.

ria. But she was not in a condition to be seen by any one, for she was still delirious.

In this condition did the Baron remain till Adelaide's arrival. The meeting between them was such as one would expect between two people so circumstanced. After some conversation, the Baron and Adelaide repaired to the convent, where Adelaide gained admission to her still delirious friend. Maria did not take the least notice of Adelaide, but continued still to address her conversation to the Marquis. This melancholy spectacle proved too much for Ade-

Adelaide. She was obliged to return to the inn, where she found the Baron preparing to accompany the remains of the amiable and unfortunate Marquis of Clerville to his seat, where he was to be interred.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXI.

ON his arrival at Clerville, the Baron found the Marchioness walking in the Park, waiting the return of her son, who she heard was expected at home that day. She no sooner beheld the mournful cavalcade, and learned the fate of her amiable son, than she burst into tears. The Baron proceeded to the hall, where

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where he lodged the remains of his friend. They were no sooner in the hall, than surrounded by all his weeping domestics, who declared that they never could meet with so kind a master. The Baron begged them to be comforted; assured them he would retain every one of them in his service as long as they pleased, and would endeavour to imitate the conduct of their late worthy master.

The Marchioness sent for the Baron to her room, and inquired the particulars of her son's death. She said, that though she could not but lament his fate, she was happy he had

had not lived to disgrace his illustrious ancestors. The Baron left her, incensed to the last degree by so unfeeling a speech, and prepared to fulfil a promise he had made to his friend ; which was to send his heart inclosed in a silver urn to Maria. He accordingly set out for the convent.

C H A P. XXII.

ON his arrival he found Maria still delirious, but with lucid intervals. Adelaide, who during the Baron's absence had resided in the convent, gave him hopes of her recovery. But these hopes soon vanished. For no sooner did Maria receive from the Baron the melancholy legacy, than she became worse
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than ever; and snatching up the urn, ran to the foot of the altar, whence she would suffer none to remove her, but spent the whole night in weeping over that heart which was her's in every sense of the word.

In the morning she suffered Adelaide to lead her to her apartment, whence she never stirred for some weeks. The Baron in the mean time returned to Clerville; where, after having celebrated the funeral of his friend, he proceeded to execute his will; in which he had left the estate of Clerville to the Baron, subject to a pension of three thousand
livres

livres to Maria, and five hundred to each of her parents.

This affair being settled, he once more set out for the convent. On his arrival, Maria appeared at the grate with her friend, which till now she had not done since she had received the fatal present. The meeting was affecting in the highest degree. The Baron and Adelaide wept in silence. Maria continued still to rave, and address herself to the Marquis. The Baron could bear this interview no longer; but retired from the grate, leaving Adelaide to conduct her friend back to her apartment.

ment. At two in the morning Maria arose, and taking with her the urn, repaired to the chapel, where she continued weeping, till Adelaide waking, and missing her, went to the chapel in search of her, and with difficulty prevailed on her to return.

Maria continued in this state for some time; but at length she changed her manner, and never spoke at all, but remained in a deep and fixed melancholy. She was now so much emaciated by her constant grief, that the physicians despaired of her life: But, to the astonishment of every one, she continued in this situation
for

for two years ; during which time Adelaide never left the convent. At the end of this time she became so feeble, that Adelaide, seeing her dissolution approaching, sent for the Baron. On his arrival Maria appeared at the grate, supported by Adelaide and two nuns. She was now so altered, that the Baron hardly knew her. He attempted to speak to her ; but was so much affected, that he could not. She made signs for them to bring her a chair, on which she seated herself ; and, resting her hand on the urn, asked him if that contained her Clerville's heart. To this the Baron answered in the affirmative ;

tive; on which she exclaimed, Cler-ville is dead! and, sinking into the arms of Adelaide, ceased to sigh.

It is impossible to describe the feelings of the spectators. Adelaide threw herself on the corpse, and bedewed it with her tears. The Baron retired to the inn to give vent to his grief, whence he stirred not till next day. He then waited on the bishop of the diocese and the lady abbess of the convent, who both consented to his request, and permitted him to remove Maria's body to Cler-ville, where it was interred in the same grave with that of her unfortunate

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nate lover. On the tomb the Baron inscribed the following epitaph, written by himself, having previously enshrined the heart of Maria in a silver urn, and placed it, together with that of the Marquis, on their tomb.

EPITAPH

E P I T A P H

On the Tomb of

CLERVILLE and MARIA.

Written by the Baron FITZOU.

PASS not. Here CLERVILLE and MARIA sleep.
Sad pair ! ye ceas'd at once to live and weep.
Long o'er her Clerville's urn Maria wept,
And each sad night a solemn vigil kept ;
But now like Clerville's do her sorrows cease,
And sad Maria's soul is hush'd to peace.
Lo ! silver urns their wo-worn hearts inclose,
Whilst in the silent tomb they seek repose,
Who ne'er on earth that dearest blessing knew.
Shade them, ye willows, and thou mournful yew !
Watch—O watch o'er their dust, ye gentle Pow'rs !
Who kindly calm the saints departing hours.
So shall FITZOU your praises ever sing,
When through the choir the hallow'd anthems ring.

F I N I S.



